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ABSTRACT

Because of changes in the bases of financial support for graduate education, in supply-demand and placement factors, and in student selection of major fields, increased surveillance and even guidelines and restrictions on the creation, accreditation, and support of new doctoral programs have become justified. Some have proposed to limit Ph.D. production to 50, 75, or 100 of the older, more prestigious institutions of higher education. This would have the potential of stifling the intellectual and creative aspects of the degree, because quality and innovation cannot be maintained in all disciplines in any selected number of schools. Some of the emerging institutions have Ph.D.-granting departments that have received the leadership and support necessary to establish a quality degree, generally in programs for which there is substantial local need and support. In addition, limiting the Ph.D. programs to a few institutions, could create a schism in higher education and become a source for political intrigue. Seventy-three percent of all Ph.D. students are part-time and many of them are at the "emerging" institutions. This must be taken into account when the decisions regarding Ph.D. programs are made. (AF)

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DOCTORAL PROGRAMS IN NEW AND EMERGING INSTITUTIONS- TO BE OR NOT TO BE?*

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DR. EDWIN L. LIVELY: Inasmuch as I prefer to speak extemporaneously, I thought I had better write my remarks down. (Laughter)

Serious attention is being directed toward the increase in the number of universities offering or planning to offer doctoral degree programs. There are concomitant concerns about the number of degree programs that should exist in the several academic disciplines at the graduate level.

Interest is currently becoming intensified by changes in bases of financial support in supply-demand and placement factors, and in student selection of major fields.

The potential impact of these changes certainly justifies an increased surveillance and perhaps

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the establishment of guidelines and even restrictions on the creation, accreditation, and support of new doctoral programs.

Justification for new doctoral programs includes such diverse factors as, one: The unique characteristics of disciplines and/or schools;

Two: Local factors in student supply and demand;

Three: Political considerations at local, state and national levels;

Four: An extant master's program of high quality;

Five: A supportive role necessary for doctoral programs in related disciplines;

Six: Probable trends in the evolution of society and its institutions on the basis of both short- and long-range projections; and

Seven: Past and present involvement in the doctoral level.

A modified version of the last point is the basis for several recent proposals to limit Ph.D. production to 50, 75, or perhaps 100 of the older, more prestigous institutions of higher education.

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The thesis of this brief presentation is that historical justification alone is untenable for degree control because it accepts persistence in quantity and quality as fact, regardless of present and future events.

Within the range of factors, the historical traditional one undoubtedly varies from school to school and discipline to discipline in its validity. To concentrate doctoral support and degree-granting approval within any specified number or list of universities has the potential of stifling the intellectual and creative aspects of the degree.

The vigorous competition and search for innovation among the programs in the newer and emerging institutions may well function more effectively than any other factor to prevent complacency and to encourage temporary relevance in doctoral programs.

Certainly the limitations on resources, human, physical, and economic are supportive of proposals to consider quantitative and qualitative controls on graduate degree programs. However, the assumption that quality can be achieved and maintained in all disciplines in any selected number of schools ignores the reality of

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competition for advantage among departments on an intra as well as inter university basis.

Comparing universities as a whole would unquestionably provide the basis for a ranking, assuming reasonably objective criteria could be agreed upon.

But comparing universities discipline by discipline would show some drastic discrepancies, especially below the top ten or fifteen. It is no secret that many of the productive schools in total Ph.D's. have some programs that are weak, if not dead.

Conversely, the emerging universities have Ph.D.-granting departments that have received the leadership and support necessary to establish a high quality degree, although the pattern would be one of considerable variation for the aggregate of their programs.

The strongest programs in the newer and emerging schools are likely to be ones for which there is substantial local need and support. This is commensurate with the suggestion of President Rees in her opening remarks; namely, that institutions should specialize in that which they can do well.

The emerging university, frequently an urban university, is forced to face current trends long

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before the traditional school, partly because the latter has already resolved its identity crisis, and partly because the former lives in the midst of its severest critics.

There are three possible consequences of degree restrictions on an historic, traditional basis that should be noted here.

One is the probability that the excluded schools would combine to establish their own associations and accrediting bodies, thus creating a schism in one of the major common denominators for quality.

It is also unlikely that politicians in the excluded areas would remain aloof from involvement. So political intrigue in the formof degree porkbarreling at the state and federal level comes to the fore.

Thirdly, the Ph.D. recipients from these institutions who could not find employment in one of the chosen few schools would be effectively denied participation in making their direct contributions to the next generation of doctoral students.

In conclusion, I would argue that the serious and broad scale ramifications of changes such as those proposed for degree program restrictions require

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far more intensive and extensive study than has taken place to the present.

When Dr. Arlt says that 73 per cent of the doctoral students today are part time, the conclusion seems evident that the impact of the emerging university which is most likely to serve the part time student is already here, and within the next few years the list of degree-producing institutions may show some drastic revisions.

If there is skepticism about quality in the new and emerging institutions, I would point out that while the admission pattern may show some variations, the new and emerging university cannot afford a failure in the end product.

Their first few graduates establish their reputation and it will be slow to change thereafter.